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Q. 89a

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Talking Points:

- Venezuela major energy supplier, shared democratic tradition. Historically have had positive, useful bilateral relationship.
- Chávez's relationship with Castro worrisome. Have stated clearly U.S. displeasure with Chávez's relationships with Cuba, nor Libya, Iraq, or Iran.
- Have warned GOV that its relations with FARC, ELN will affect relations with U.S. Looking very closely at issue of possible Venezuelan material support for Colombian terrorist organizations.
- Recently, relationship troubled by disagreements, concerns about recent political developments. Intimidation of opposition politicians, media by Chávez supporters very troubling. Peaceful demonstrations part of democratic process, intimidation not. Closely monitoring.
- Looking for ways to keep relationship on track. Urge Venezuela: to focus on practical actions to improve relationship; to engage hemispheric agenda to defend democracy, promote regional economic integration, combat international terrorism.

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